/45 cont./

857 A joint duty of children of both sexes is the care of their younger brothers or sisters when circumstances require it, though this is mainly performed by girls when there are any of the right age.

b) Girls. Little girls five years old are given small tasks, such as carrying messages, going to the fields to take some small item to the father or an uncle, drawing water in vessels so that the elders may bring it on burros up to the house. At six or seven they begin to do some cooking. From ten to twelve years, that is to say at, the prepubertal age, they are initiated into the different ways of weaving, and they can go alone from one settlement to another. It is at this time that they occasionally have sexual relations with their brothers or with their father.

857 Almost from the time she can look after herself -- toward three or four years of age -- the girl assists her mother in all her work, especially when she is the eldest and when she belongs to a family with few economic resources. In the kitchen she learns to prepare food such as mazamorra, bollos /rolls/, and arepa /ground-corn griddlecakes/; to hull corn and grind it with the traditional equipment, the pestle and mortar made of stone; to light and keep the fire going; to handle the pots on it and build new hearths; and, in time, to prepare the various kinds of chicha and the customary soups for special occasions, to make use of the different fruits, both wild and cultivated, and to serve up various local dishes such as sancocho de chivo /goat-meat stew/, the way of preparing meat etc., until, having arrived at the moment of puberty, she is on the whole acquainted with all the customary culinary procedures.

Other work they are taught to do quite young is fetching water and firewood as well as a series of household chores such as house cleaning, taking care of the younger children, and at times feeding them and keeping them clean. They are sent to the woods to bring in the burros that are used for carrying water or fruit or serve for the women to ride on. /46/

857 They also start to lend a hand in the harvest and accompany the women when they collect wild fruits such as olives,

/47 cont./

chichas and cojosa (sour milk), and, when he cuts his teeth, solid food which had previously had to be mashed for easier swallowing. After passing this period, the child eats the same as any adult, with slight differences marked by the family organization, as we have just seen, receiving the plain food served since it is unusual for him to share in any special dishes which the adult members of the household may eat.

During periods of scarcity the gathering and use of wild fruits is an important item in the household economy. The Guajiro, when he finds any such fruit, will immediately eat as much as he can, until satiety is reached. Regularity in hours of eating is very difficult in such circumstances -- one might say that the Guajiro has no fixed mealtimes, but that he eats when he obtains some food. In normal times and in homes where the shortage of food is not much felt, the family's hours /48/ for meals are more or less as follows: On rising, very early, they take a little coffee with panela, if there is any, or more often a gourdful of cojosa (1); in the evening after

1. Milk which is left to sour in special food vessels.

sunset, upon returning from work, they have their principal meal composed of mazamorra with milk, some rolls or corn griddlecakes and coffee or a chicha of fruit, corn, or yucca. The normal diet does not include the daily eating of meat, which is only eaten on certain rare occasions, the same as cheese and certain vegetables such as ahuyamas /Cucurbita berucosa/, gourds, yucca, etc. Toasted corn with salt or something sweet is frequently eaten, rice soup (a very much-used food), dry rice, or a soup of trupillo pods /Mimosaceae/, which are chewed after having been parboiled, the fibers later being spat out, or mixed with milk. At periods when food is in short supply, they have the habit of making use of the tender shoots of cacti, which are roasted over a flame in order to get

/48 cont./

252 at the heart, which they eat, for by cooking in this way it be-
262 comes soft and digestible. They also include in their diet soups and special dishes made of beans.

264 The boys employed in work other than pasturing, who stay
262 at home or can readily return there, take the usual breakfast upon rising; later, when the hours of heat begin and the Guajiro returns to his home to rest on his hammock in the shade of his enramada /a bough-covered shelter/, he eats a meal which is more or less similar to that described above, and, toward seven at night, another.

A boy will add to his usual meals what he can find by picking wild fruit, hunting small animals or birds, by stealing food at home, and by drinking the milk he can obtain from the goats or other animals he has in his care.

264 We must add in conclusion that in no case does the woman occupy the first place when food is being served if there are men in the family. At the most she may occupy her mother's place if no older female relatives are present, it falling on her in this case to serve the food. If there are female slaves or bond servants or maids in the home these will carry out this duty under her supervision. These cases when the mother is replaced by the daughters in the task of serving the meals to the family are not frequent, as it is customary for the head woman not to leave her post for any lengthy interval without placing her responsibilities in the hands of a person competent to replace her.

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513 The child of middle years keeps the same hours for sleeping as the adult. Generally, the child possesses from his birth
[262] onward an Indian-style hammock /chinchorro or hamaca/ /49/,
[265] that is to say, one made of cords of twisted agave fibers arranged in horizontal rows. This type of hammock is meant for young children, because bed-wetting at night is frequent in some cases, but especially because it is strong, cheap, and readily replaceable. We never heard of a case of a child sleeping on the ground.

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

881 584 invitation. Again cattle are butchered, and there is drinking and dancing and horse-racing. Numbers of men come to see if they would like to put themselves forward as suitors. The more eminent guests are received in the house itself, and the girl is now present. Her shorn hair has grown and been trimmed to a page-boy cut, and she wears her best clothes and new ornaments. She hides her hair clippings carefully in a bag, for she does not want to risk anyone getting hold of them and using them to acquire power over her by the arts of magic. Later, she will secretly bury them under a cow pat. That will help to increase her herds. The droppings of various animals play a great part in the magic of the Guajiro, and it would seem that there is negro influence here as well.

[754 826] [789 514]

881 The girl has now been born again—she is a new person, a woman. She knows all that an adult woman needs to know and can do everything that a wife and mother should be able to do. Pale and lovely, she steps out into life once more and inquisitive young men swarm round her. The rich give a big feast, the poor provide simpler fare, but it is always a great occasion.

[582] A Guajiro man will never marry a girl before she has undergone this period of confinement, which means that people seldom marry too early. It is said that in the old days rich old men with several wives sometimes bought little poor girls as concubines, believing that that would enhance their virility.

[595 831]

The girl's long segregation is intended to protect her from the supernatural dangers that are thought to threaten her, especially during this sensitive period of transition from childhood to womanhood. The girl can also be dangerous to others through being exposed to attack by spirits. It is only practical that during this period she should practise handicrafts.

252 [354] Going back to the house, we found the women at the fires, which there were protected by special small cactus screens. There was no need to have them under a roof at that time of the year, only to shelter them from the wind. The pots stood over the fire supported on three stones.

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

They were of black earthenware ornamented with figures. The women were making maize gruel. There, close to the green valleys, they ought to have been able to get any vegetables or roots they liked, yet they clung to their diet of maize and goat's meat. They had obviously put the pots on because they expected the men, and sure enough a couple of naked horsemen came galloping up, so at one with their horses that they looked like centaurs. The Guajiro Indians can be born on a horse in the literal sense, if their mothers have to be on a journey at the time. They look well on horseback, and even the old men rode well. The younger men were muscular and well-made, and more pleasing to our eye than the women.

The men had been out enjoying themselves. They had been hunting and their clan mark was painted in blue on their thighs. They must have done that to amuse themselves before they left, for normally both men and women have their clan marks tattooed.

We asked the men what they had hunted with, for they carried neither bows nor firearms, and also what they had hunted, for they did not seem to have got anything. They laughed and explained that they had had no luck, and showed us slings of plaited bast. They had been out after doves or rabbits, but had seen nothing. (The Creoles call the animal in question a rabbit, but its Latin name is *Sylvilagus cunicus*.) They showed us the short throwing clubs with which they hunted this and made some practice throws. They were expert at hitting the target with both club and sling, but only at distances of twenty to thirty yards.

A youth showed us a whistle that he said would unfailingly entice a deer if you blew it—provided there was a deer nearby, as he hastened to add. Judging by the expression on the women's faces he was no famous hunter. A couple of men also arrived and we were able to think of doing business. We had no difficulty in buying what we wanted, provided we paid well. Prices were our great difficulty, yet these men were less spoiled than elsewhere in the peninsula. The Guajiro not only trafficked with the

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

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A professional mourner

Below: *The daily butchering*

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[Facing p. 128]

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

known of his clan. The road across the hills was bad, and at times we had to dismount and walk. Now and again we met Indians; the well-to-do leading their riding-mules, the poor followed by half-naked women carrying loads. The men carried lots of arrows. The road was reputed unsafe. The leader of each such company received a little tobacco. We heard that they were all coming from the funeral, which evidently was one of importance and would last quite a while yet. Our companion, the rich Indian, said that he expected to reach the house of mourning in six days. He thought that we ought to go there too, but the place lay a good distance off our route and we had had our fill of Indian feasts for the time being.

Francisco had travelled with Father Crispin and knew the district. He advised us to halt for the night early in an Indian rancho ringed with a stout cactus palisade, where friendly people lived. We could have gone farther, and the Indians with us who were going to the funeral carried on, but then, according to Francisco, they would not have been welcome at the rancho. We never learned the ins and outs of the Indians' friendships and enmities.

At the rancho we bartered a piece of raw sugar against a sheep. Both our pack and riding animals were already tired. They had had far too little fodder and the water was salt. The Indians were up before cock-crow, as always, and we let them get the mules ready. If we could just get to Castilletes, they should have fodder and decent water: we needed provisions ourselves. But what about the sheep, asks the attentive reader. That went the same evening we bought it, our hosts partaking of it as heartily as our own people. It went, offal, guts and all. When nothing but the bones were left, these were split and the marrow sucked out. Then the women gathered up the remains for broth. That sheep cost the equivalent of fourpence-halfpenny. Our means were limited, but at such prices we could at least afford to feed our men. The difficulty was in getting hold of things to eat. The Indians know how to tighten their belts and are prepared to starve for a while, if need be, but they must have a blow-out now and again.

the chief game. The *Goajiro* who live near the coast sometimes catch fish (with hook and line), lobsters, mollusks, and crabs.

Cattle raising.—The *Goajiro* are primarily nomadic cattle raisers and, consequently, depend upon the water supply. In the rainy season they seek natural depressions, which they sometimes enlarge artificially, where the water may gather. In case of drought they wander toward the sea, where wells 30 to 40 feet (9 to 12 m.) deep are dug.

Besides cattle the *Goajiro* keep sheep, goats, horses (pl. 72, *bottom, left*), mules, pigs, and domestic fowls, which they take with them wherever they go. An estimate gives them 100,000 cattle, 200,000 sheep and goats, 30,000 horses and mules, and 30,000 donkeys. As cattle are a measure of wealth, the Indians are reluctant to kill them for food, but they utilize the milk or export the animals to Curaçao and Aruba in exchange for textiles and corn. Each tribe has its own cattle brand, and the annual round-up and branding is an occasion for great festivities. Horse races and other sports take place, and large quantities of food and drink are consumed.

Food preparation.—*Goajiro* diet consists almost entirely of meat and milk products. Goats and sheep are killed every day or two for meat, and the milk of the cows is made into butter and cheese. This diet is supplemented by yuca, cactus fruit, sugar, rice, and plantains, the last three obtained from Colombian and Venezuelan traders in exchange for skins. Meat that is not immediately consumed is suspended from tall poles, and skins are pegged to the ground and salted in preparation for sale. Butter is made by stirring the cream with a stirred stick in a calabash or wooden bucket. To make cheese, rennet is added to skimmed milk in a trough, and the curds are put in a primitive wooden cheese press, which is weighted with a heavy rock.

HOUSES AND VILLAGES

Although the *Goajiro* are of a common origin, they are divided into clans ("castes" or "tribes"), each living within a rather limited area (Simons, 1885, p. 796). The clans are split into local groups, which occupy extended villages or rancherías, each with 2 to 50 houses (ranchos) and 10 to 250 or more Indians. Houses are always within gunshot distance of one another and so disposed that surprise attacks would be difficult. If a village is at all permanent, a protective cactus hedge surrounds it.

Goajiro nomadism makes elaborate houses unnecessary. Dwellings are mere lean-tos, arbors, and temporary gabled roofs supported on poles. Thatch is made from the sheaves of the cactus, split lengthwise. Rough tables, chairs with rawhide seats, and benches are often used. The hammock is always present. House walls are often lacking, but a corner of the hut may be closed off for a girl's puberty seclusion. When mi-